THE CUSTOMARY GATHERINGS OF ZIKR GROUPS

Gatherings wherein Zikr is made in groups is not established from any Hadith. Those Ahaadith wherein Halqahs of Zikr are established, for example,
“He who remembers Me (Allaah Ta`ala) to himself (in his heart), I remember him to Myself, and as for him who remembers me in a gathering, I remember him in a greater gathering than theirs.”
Etc.

The object of such Ahaadith are not as propounded by those who support the Halqahs of Zikr. In other words, they are not proof to validate the Halqahs of Zikr.

The Halqah of Zikr is neither proven from the practices of the Sahaabah, nor from the Tabi`een, nor from the four Imaams of Fiqh. From the Khairul Quroon (The Best of Eras), the only validity found to support Halqah of Zikr is for Ta`leem and Tableegh (learning and teaching), and for recitation of Qur`aan Shareef.

We cannot understand these Ahaadith better than the Sahaabah-e-Kiraam (radhiallahu anhum). The statements and practices of the Sahaabah-e-Kiraam are Tafseer for the Ahaadith. It is not permissible to move away from this and interpret the Ahaadith for ourselves. If the verbal Tafseer for the Halqah of Zikr was not reported, then the actions of Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) and the Sahaabah would have been sufficient. Here we have the verbal Tafseer of Hadhrat Ataa (rahmatullahi alaih). Hadhrat Ataa (rahmatullahi alaih) was a high ranking Tabi`ee. He had the honour of meeting with 200 Sahaabah. He held a high ranking in (the narration of) Ahaadith. He had made Tafseer of the gatherings of Zikr in the following way:

“(They were) Gatherings of (showing) Halaal and Haraam. (They were demonstrations of) how you should perform Salaah, how you should fast, how you should make Nikah and give Talaaq, and how you should buy and sell...” [Al-Bidaaya Wan Nihaaya, page 306, vol.9]

I understand this Tafseer of the Hakqah of Zikr to be an Usool of the Shariah, which has come down through he ages.

Even though some commentators of Hadith have explained the Halqahs of Zikr as Tasbeeh and Tahleel, etc., but this is not reported. In fact, besides it being not

reported and contrary to the Usool, it is nonsensical also. When there is learning, teaching and Qur`aanic recital listening, then it has to be done in a form of a group that is sitting down. Now, contrary to this, for the reciting of Tasbeeh and Tahleel, firstly, there is NO need for a group, and secondly, even if there happens to be coincidentally a group present, then too, what is the need to make it in a Halqah (i.e. all together)?

Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas`ud (radhiallahu anhu) ejected a group that were making Zikr loudly in the Masjid and he labeled them as Bid`atees.

To gather for the purpose of Zikr is a Bid`at in itself, then all the more is it to make it in a Halqah. It appears as though some have used general Zikr to establish and prove therewith conditional Zikr. The pungence of this is not hidden from the AhleIlm.

For individual Zikr, the Zikr of 'Isme Zaat' is not proven from any Hadith. Some Mashaa`ikh present the following Hadith:
"The Final Hour will not come until there is noen on earth to say: 'Allaah Allaah'."

This proof is not correct because, firstly, the first "Allaah" is Mubtada (subject in the sentence) and the second "Allaah" is the Khabar (predicate in the sentence) and has the meaning of 'Deity'. The object of the Hadith is that Qiyaamah will not come until there is someone who professes to Allaah Ta`ala s being the One worthy of worship. Like it comes in the Qur`aan: ***"And He is Allaah in the heavens and the earth"***, where the word 'Allaah' comes in the meaning of 'Deity' (One worthy of worship). It does not refer to 'Isme Zaat'. In fact it is a extensive term referring to Deity and the word "Huwa" also refers to the word 'Allaah' which appears before it, which ***is*** an Isme Zaat. In this Aayat if one takes the word "Allaah" as a proper noun, thenit would necessarily refer to 'zarfiyat' (time or place). And we know that Allaah Ta`ala is NOT confined to time or place.

The crux of the matter is that the Zikr of Isme Zaat is not established from any Hadith. Just as it is permissible by Ijma, that each word of the Qur`aan may be recited many times over by the person who is making Hifz thereof, and this is the generally practiced method, in a similar way, to firmly establish and permeate Zikr in their murideen, the Mashaa`ikh have formulated the method of repeating the Zikr of Isme Zaat, as we see being generally practiced at the Khaan Qahs.

Those practices that are undertaken and prescribed as a remedy for spiritual illness, if it is exercised on an individual basis, then there is no fear of it spoiling and causing misunderstanding amongst the masses. But, when it is being practiced in forms of groups, and it is being done loudly, then the masses start regarding such methods as being Sunnat. The general rule is this that when a non-Sunnat act becomes accepted as a Sunnat act, then it is Waajib to leave out this act and refrain therefrom.

The differences between individual Zikr and Halqahs of Zikr are as follows:

1. Individual Zikr is carried out as a method of permeating a specific form of Zikr in oneself or it is done as a form of expressing Muhabbat (love) for Allaah Ta`ala. A specific mannerism (rhythm) is adopted as a form of Ilaaj (remedy). This is not regarded as a Sunnat. If by coincidence many Zikireen are gathered at the same place and many are making Zikr (individually) at the same time, then too, one will not regard this as being a Sunnat practice. It will be regarded as a coincidence. Contrary to this, those people who organise Loud Zikr sessions try to prove their practice from the Ahaadith.

2. The general masses are not generally aware of individual Zikr practices, hence theer is no fear of it being misunderstood by them, where they regard it as being a Sunnat. Contrary to Loud Zikr sessions made in groups, where invitations are extended.

3. In our Silsilah, where an individual is prescribed with a specific form of Zikr, it is done as a remedy for that particular person. This is done on an individual basis where the Zikr may differ from person to person, depending on his condition. It is prescribed, keeping in mind the convenience, health, etc. of the person. According to Usool each person is called upon individually and explained the method and way of performing the Zikr. He is also made aware that this Zikr is an Ilaaj, and not a Sunnat practice. Contrary to the Halwahs of Loud Zikr, where all these stipulations

are not granted any consideration. Therefore, the masses have started to regard this as a Sunnat practice.

4. Those from amongst the masses who participate in these Halqahs of Zikr, have started regarding those Auliyaa who never practiced such forms of Halqahs, as being people who abandon the Sunnat and as those who neglect Zikr and as unwary people

THE HALQAHS OF ZIKR OF THE PREVIOUS MASHAA`IKH:

There was scant fear of the Aqeedah of the people of the past being spoilt, hence some Mashha`ikh used to prescribe for those who were in need of such remedies, a specific type of Zikr and they used to allow these people to make this Zikr whilst sitting together. It would be recited in poetic form. Alternatively they would allow them to make it loudly. Gradually this method became widespread. The practices of the present are different from that of the previous Mashaa`ikh in the following ways:

1. Initially, this was the method of some Mas``ikh, but nowadays this has become the method of almost every Shaikh.
2. Previously this method was adopted for only a few Muta`alliqeen (Murideen), but nowadays, all the Muta`alliqeen are made to practise on this.
3. Previously this type of Zikr was prescribed to the few Muta`alliqeen with specific spiritual ailments, whereas nowadays it is done by all and sundry in any condition.
4. Previously it was practiced as a spiritual remedy, nowadays it is done as a basic course.
5. Previously it used to be practiced in closed places, nowadays it is done in Musaajid.
6. Previously it was done discreetly and without public announcements, nowadays it is done with particular attention being focused on it being widely publicised.
7. Previously there was scant fear of the beliefs of the people being spoilt, nowadays this fear is very rife.

8. Nowadays, never mind the masses, even the Ulama are trying to propound it as being a Sunnat. Those who do not attend and participate in these Halqahs are also viewed with sceptism by the proponent thereof.

It has come to my attention that at some Madressahs (Daarul Ulooms) at the final 'Bukhari Khatam' , there are some odd and queer practices that have become vogue and are against the practices of our senior Ulama of the past. Invitations are handed out in the form of printed cards etc. And then at these gatherings, instead of there being beneficial Ilmi talks and commentaries on Ahaadith, one person will give a very long du`aa, whilst screaming and shouting. They are using this as a conveyance to reach their du`aas to Allaah Ta`ala! Like the Shiahs do at some of their gatherings, they simulate crying and emotions, and they try to incite the crowd also into crying.

If this information is true, then this is a very serious and perilous Bid`at. It is not permissible to make public invitations and announcements for Nafl Salaah. When this is the case for Nafl Jamaat, then all the more is it not permissible for du`aa in Jamaat. These institutions of Ilm must refrain herefrom.

May Allaah Ta`ala save us all! Allaah Ta`ala is the ONLY One who can save us from the evil of Bid`a (innovations).

Mufti Rashid Ahmed Ludhiyanvi.